



U.S. Department of Justice

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ROCKFORD MAN INDICTED FOR FEDERAL TAX FRAUD

ROCKFORD -- PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and BYRAM TICHENOR, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, today made the following announcement:

A federal grand jury in Rockford today indicted **JOHN H. BELL**, 62, of Rockford, for preparing false federal income tax returns for others, and for filing a false federal income tax return for himself. The indictment alleges that Bell, the owner of Bell's Income Tax Service and of Real Estate Investors #2462, Inc. ("REI"), prepared false income tax returns for others. In order to support those returns, the indictment alleges that Bell attached W-2s to the returns that falsely stated the amounts of income the taxpayers received from REI and falsely stated that REI had withheld federal income tax from the taxpayers when in fact, no such taxes had been withheld by Bell or his corporation.

The indictment further alleges that Bell filed an income tax return for himself that falsely stated that \$8,360 in federal income tax had been withheld from him, when no federal income tax had been withheld by REI. As a result of the false return, the indictment charges, Bell wrongfully attempted to obtain a refund of \$8,701.

If convicted of the crimes charged in the indictment, Bell faces up to five years of imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000 for each of the four charges. Defendants convicted of tax offenses are also subject to the payment of costs of prosecution as well as the civil collection of all taxes, penalties, and interest due in addition to any criminal penalties.

The arraignment has been set for Thursday, March 3, 2005 at 11:00 a.m. before Magistrate Judge P. Michael Mahoney in the federal courthouse in Rockford. The case was investigated by Special Agents of Criminal Investigations of the Internal Revenue Service. It will be prosecuted in United States District Court by Assistant United States Attorney JOHN G. McKENZIE.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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